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Letter dated 26 December 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict established pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005), containing an account of the Working Group's activities from 1 January to 31 December 2018. The report, which was approved by the Working Group, is being submitted in accordance with the note by the President of the Security Council of 29 March 1995 (S/1995/234).

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Olof **Skoog**
Chair
Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

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[Original: English]

Report of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict established pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005)

I. Introduction

1. The present report of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, established pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005), covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2018.

2. During the reporting period, the Bureau of the Working Group consisted of Olof Skoog (Sweden) as Chair and the representative of Côte d'Ivoire as Vice-Chair.

II. Background

3. On 26 July 2005, the Security Council adopted resolution 1612 (2005), on children and armed conflict. In paragraph 8 of that resolution, the Council decided to establish a working group of the Council to review the reports of the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict, to review progress in the development and implementation of the action plans to halt recruitment and use of children in violation of international obligations and to consider other relevant information presented to it. The Council also decided that the working group should:

(a) Make recommendations to the Council on possible measures to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through recommendations on appropriate mandates for peacekeeping missions and recommendations with respect to the parties to the conflict;

(b) Address requests, as appropriate, to other bodies within the United Nations system for action to support the implementation of the resolution in accordance with their respective mandates.

4. On 2 May 2006, the Working Group adopted its terms of reference, which were subsequently published as a document of the Security Council (S/AC.51/2007/1). On 8 September of the same year, the Working Group adopted a list of options for possible actions which is referred to as the "toolkit" (S/AC.51/2007/2).

5. Pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005), the Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict has submitted periodic reports to the Council on developments in relation to the Working Group since 2006.

6. On 9 July 2018, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2427 (2018), which had 98 co-sponsors. The resolution provided a comprehensive framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being and the empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle and emphasized how the children and armed conflict agenda is integral to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. In the same resolution the Council also welcomed the launch by the Secretary-General of a process to compile practical guidance on the integration of child protection issues in peace processes.

III. Summary of the activities of the Working Group

7. During the reporting period, the Working Group held eight formal meetings, on 22 January, 12 March, 4 May, 5 July, 7 August, 10 October, 20 November and 18 December and met eight times in informal consultations on 26 March, 12 April, 24 July, 31 July, 16 November, 4 December, 7 December and 13 December in addition to conducting its work through written procedures and informal informal meetings.

8. At its 69th meeting, held on 22 January 2018, the Working Group discussed the fourth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Myanmar (S/2017/1099), covering the period from 1 February 2013 to 30 June 2017. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report, recalling the main conclusions, after which the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations presented the views of his Government on the report.

9. At its 70th meeting, held on 12 March 2018, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Mali (S/2018/136), covering the period from 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2017, after which the Deputy Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations delivered a statement. In addition, a representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) presented the Secretary-General's global horizontal note covering the period from July to September 2018.

10. At its 71st 1 meeting, held on 4 May 2018, the Working Group adopted conclusions on children and armed conflict in Mali, on which the Deputy Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations delivered a statement.

11. At its 72nd meeting, held on 5 July 2018, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2018/502), covering the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2017. The Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations also delivered a statement to the Working Group. In addition, there was a presentation by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on her visit to Myanmar, which was followed by a presentation by a representative of UNICEF of the Secretary-General's global horizontal note covering the period from October to December 2017.

12. At its 73rd meeting, held on 7 August, the Working Group adopted conclusions on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on which the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations delivered a statement.

13. At its 74th meeting, held on 10 October, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in South Sudan (S/2018/865), covering the period from 1 October 2014 to 30 June 2018. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report, recalling its main conclusions, after which the Permanent Representative of South Sudan to the United Nations presented the views of his Government on the report. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General subsequently updated the Working Group on her recent visit to South Sudan. This was followed by a presentation by a representative of UNICEF on the global horizontal note for the period of January to March 2018.

14. At its 75th meeting, held on 20 November, the Working Group discussed the fifth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Myanmar

(S/2018/956), covering the period from 1 July 2017 to 31 August 2018. A representative of the Government of Myanmar also delivered a statement to the Working Group. This was followed by a presentation by a representative of UNICEF on the global horizontal note covering the period of from April to June 2018.

15. At its 76th meeting, held on 18 December 2018, the Working Group adopted the conclusions on children and armed conflict in South Sudan.

16. Pursuant to the adoption of the aforementioned conclusions, the Working Group also released three public statements as Security Council press releases, containing messages addressed to all parties to the armed conflict, to the Government and to community and religious leaders, in Mali (on 4 May 2018), in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (on 7 August 2018) and in South Sudan (on 18 December 2018).

17. In 2018, the Working Group sent 81 communications to 25 Member States and other stakeholders regarding the adopted conclusions on the situation of children in Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan contained in its reports.

18. From 4 to 7 November 2018, the members of the Working Group visited South Sudan, where they met with senior Government officials, including the First Vice-President, Taban Deng Gai, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, the Chief of the Defence Forces and Head of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, the Inspector General of the Police, the Chairperson of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the Governors of Boma and Jonglei, as well as with representatives of other relevant ministries and security forces. The members of the Working Group also had the chance to visit reintegration programmes, including vocational centres in Bor and Pibor for children previously recruited or used by parties to armed conflict, as well as to engage with the Co-Chairs of the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting on children in armed conflict – the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and UNICEF – with other United Nations representatives, international and local non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations, including a meeting with representatives of the diplomatic community through the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict in Juba. In Bor and Pibor, the members of the Working Group had the chance to meet with children affected by armed conflict who had been released by parties to the conflict during 2018 and who are now benefiting from reintegration support provided by UNICEF and implementing partners.